

Ambiguities in Pleasure and Discipline: The Development of Competitive Surfing

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I have one lasting memory of those formative years of pro surfing: we are sitting on the balcony of a Burleigh Heads [Queensland] high-rise unit during the first remarkable week of the Stubbies [contest] in 1977. We are sunned and surfed out but the fridge is full of beer, we have binoculars and a clear view of several thousand beautiful women and MR [Mark Richards] and [Michael] Peterson shredding six foot barrels. By turning our heads 90 degrees we can watch the Centenary [cricket] Test on the large television. David Hookes is hitting Tony Greig all over the [Melbourne Cricket Ground]. Hookes slashes, MR rips, beer slurps, tits jiggle, sun beats down. This is as near to a religious experience as I've been in my life.

—Phil Jarratt, former editor, *Tracks* magazine¹

Following its “rediscovery” at the turn of the century, the Hawaiian art of surfing (riding a board across the face of a breaking wave) diffused throughout the Pacific.² By the outbreak of the Second World War, surfing was a recognized leisure pursuit on the Pacific rim, particularly southern California, Australia, New Zealand, and Peru, as well as in South Africa. Surfing developed as a recreation and an organized sport after the war. This article analyzes the growth of surfing as an effect of what Chris Rojek calls the “legitimizing rules of pleasure and [discipline].”³ Mass consumer capitalism created the conditions under which the middle classes revised traditional ideas about leisure as an adjunct of work; leisure became an autonomous social practice based on individually chosen lifestyles. But while consumer capitalism promoted greater freedom and tolerance in leisure, it also raised concerns about “correct” behavior. Among the moralistic middle classes, hedonistic leisure, such as surfing, generated anxiety about methods of disciplining youth. In the early 1960s, local authorities attempted to regulate surfing by closing beaches and imposing taxes

1. Phil Jarratt, “Pro surfing in the olden days,” *Tracks* (May 1985): 12.

2. Calvinist missionaries “banned” surfing in Hawaii and it went into rapid decline. By the end of the nineteenth century, less than a few dozen Hawaiians surfed. The tourist industry helped revive surfing in Hawaii which then spread to California, Australia, New Zealand and Peru with the “travels” of Hawaiian surfers such as George Freeth and Duke Kahanamoku. Leonard Lueras, *Surfing: The Ultimate Pleasure* (New York: Workman Publishing, 1984): 68–100.

3. Chris Rojek, *Capitalism and Leisure Theory* (London: Tavistock 1985): 181. While Rojek uses the term ‘unpleasure,’ the content of unpleasure suggests that he means discipline. See, 177–8.

on surfboards. Surfers responded and established administrative associations to regulate, codify and legitimize what they now defined as a sport. A decade later they formed a professional circuit. This initiative arose from renewed attacks in the wake of counterculture experiments with so-called “soul-surfing” and from the realization that “disciplined” professional sport offered new commercial opportunities and, paradoxically, the chance to pursue an “alternative” hedonistic lifestyle.

Hawaii, California, Australia: Bodily Freedoms and Constraints

The middle classes happily displayed their increasingly revealed bodies on beaches around the world in the interwar years. Waikiki (Hawaii), more than any beach other in the Anglo-speaking world, symbolized the new hedonism. It was the archetypal paradise with grass skirts, *leis* (flower necklaces), the *hula* (a “licentious” dance) and surfing. At Waikiki, beach boys and *wahines* (beach girls) preserved Hawaii’s traditional breezy, relaxed, casual, hedonistic culture.⁴ In 1927 Charles Paterson, president of the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia (SLSAA), described Waikiki as “a riot of colour in costumes, dressing gowns and coolie coats.” No restrictions on bathing costumes existed at Waikiki, unlike Australia and California where bare-chested *men* faced prosecution. “People wear what they like” at Waikiki, Paterson said: “some roll [their costumes] down to the waist—men and girls both.” Surfing was an integral part of Waikiki beach hedonism. Paterson observed beach boys “giving exhibitions” and “taking out bathers” on boards.⁵

Foreign cultures did not readily embrace Hawaiian hedonism. Australian moralists, for example, reviled public bathing as an affront to decency. Surfbathers, largely members of the socially and economically ambitious middle classes, formed the SLSAA in 1907 amid a debate over the representation and presentation of bathing bodies. The SLSAA gained public acceptance and legitimacy by portraying its humanitarian objectives and functions and by imposing rigorous, competitive and disciplined regimes on members. Lifesaving sports based on military-style drills were a critical aspect of the latter.⁶ Australians compared their discipline with Hawaiian debauchery. Paterson called Hawaiian beach boys “lazy” and criticized the lack of lifesavers and lifesaving equipment at Waikiki.⁷ Not surprisingly then, the SLSAA initially rejected surfboards as inappropriately hedonistic. It only accepted boards as paddling equipment after members proved their usefulness in rescue operations.⁸

4. Grady Timmons, *Waikiki Beachboy* (Honolulu: Editions Limited, 1989); Elvi Whittaker, *The Mainland Haole: The White Experience in Hawaii* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986): 16–35.

5. Surf Life Saving Association of Australia, *Twentieth Annual Report 1927–28* (1928). Historians credit Paterson with bringing the first Hawaiian surfboard to Australia in 1912.

6. Douglas Booth, “War off Water: The Australian Surf Life Saving Association and the Beach,” *Sporting Traditions: Journal of the Australian Society for Sports History* 7:2 (1991): 146–51.

7. SLSAA, *Twentieth Annual Report*. Paterson was a foundation member of North Steyne Surf Club, a member of the Surf Bathing Committee appointed by the NSW Government to report on the sport in 1911, and is credited with bringing the first Hawaiian surfboard to Australia in 1912.

8. Reg Harris, *Heroes of the Surf: Fifty Years’ History of Manly Life Saving Club* (Sydney: Manly Surf Life Saving Club, 1961): 55–6.

Surfing developed as an autonomous sport in California. The technical contributions of Californians and the impact of Hollywood surf movies such as *Gidget* (1959) on the sport have been well documented.⁹ Two other fundamental conditions have received less attention: mass consumer capitalism and county authorities. Consumer capitalism created the social space in which surfing developed as an acceptable hedonistic pastime in California. The commercialisation of bourgeois culture and the spread of consumer capitalism in the 1920s and 1930s helped liberate the revealed body. Consumer capitalism propagated a new culture of pleasure and a new tolerance of the revealed body essential to surfing's acceptance: it "required a new lifestyle embodied in the ethic of a calculating hedonism, and a new personality type, the narcissistic person."¹⁰ Local councils in Australia ceded control of beaches to the SLSAA which imposed new disciplinary techniques upon beachgoers. Ironically, these techniques were as oppressive as those demanded by the antibathing moralist lobby. By contrast, county authorities in California retained jurisdiction over local beaches and employed professional lifeguards to protect bathers. As county officials became more liberal, they relaxed controls over beachgoers. The beach became a visible site of hedonist culture in California and helped liberate the body from repressive regimens imposed by moralists.

Californian surfers created a peculiar "scene" in this liberal social environment.¹¹ "The search"—for most perfect and challenging waves—became the essence of the scene. Unlike Hawaii and Australia where limited transport, heavy and cumbersome boards, and a more organized club environment confined devotees to the "local" beach, social mobility and affluence in California enabled surfers to search more widely for better conditions. The search or the "surfari" quickly became synonymous with escapism in popular discourse. The scene was developing into a distinct lifestyle.

In the late 1940s, cheap air travel allowed many Californians to take their search back to Hawaii where they had observed idyllic conditions on Oahu's North Shore during wartime postings. And when they returned to the mainland after their sojourns these pioneer surfers took with them the

symbols of the warm *aloha* of Hawaii. They wore the flowered print silk shirts of the islands, casual, colourful, loose and easy, And the thong slaps. And the classic surfer shorts, cut longer to just above the knee to protect the leg from rubbing on the waxed deck. At Windansea Beach and San Onofre grass shacks were built, not unlike the palapas on the beach at Waikiki.¹²

9. Lueras, *Surfing*, 107–24. Surfers such as Tom Blake, Bob Simmons, Hobie Alter and Gordon Clark made important contributions to surfboard manufacture and design, and in particular the production of shorter, lighter and highly maneuverable "malibu" boards—named after the beach where they first became popular. Surfers made malibu boards from balsa wood covered with fibreglass and synthetic resin. Polyurethane foam later replaced balsa wood.

10. Bryan Turner, *The Body and Society* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984): 101–2.

11. Irwin defines a "scene" as an identifiable lifestyle based on a "non-instrumental system" in which members participate "because they share a set of meanings, and understandings, interests, and not because they have to cooperate to attain some goal." John Irwin, "The Natural History of an Urban Scene," *Urban Life and Culture* 2:2 (1973): 133.

12. Lueras, *Surfing* 117.

Hawaiian styles combined with other social changes in the postwar period to further transform Californian surfing. Youth in the 1950s reaped the harvest of economic prosperity combined with freedom from the responsibilities of adulthood. They benefitted from an education system undergoing a liberal transformation (in part a consequence of the technological requirements of advanced industrial production) which fostered self-expression and self-actualization. Like other scenes, surfers adopted their own argot, humor, rituals, and dress.

California's surfing population flourished in the second half of the 1950s, rising from some 5,000 in 1956 to 100,000 in 1962.¹³ International communications ensured growth spread beyond California. Hollywood and "pure" surf movies (the latter produced by devotees), specialist magazines, and demonstrations introduced California surfing to the world.¹⁴

Hedonism survives on tolerance. But as John Clarke and his colleagues remind us, tolerance is a double-edged sword: when "new social impulses are set free they are impossible to fully contain."¹⁵ In the late 1950s and early 1960s the surfing scene challenged accepted limits of social tolerance. The "brown eye" (exposing the anus to public view from a passing vehicle) was a popular antic among surfers in southern California in the late 1950s. Today, in the era of Madonna and Mapplethorpe, many people might dismiss the "brown eye" as a juvenile prank, but forty years ago it affronted moral sensibilities. Such antisocial behavior, combined with concerns about the utility of "the search" which conjured images of subversive "itinerants," "nomads" and "wanderers," produced a social backlash. "Surfer" became a dirty word: newspaper editorials condemned surfers and local councils closed beaches; some councils even banned surfboards.¹⁶

Codifying Surfing Style

Early "surfing" competitions typically consisted of paddling races with competitors riding waves to the beach standing up. But while a doctrinaire SLSAA constrained surfing in Australia, Californian and Hawaiian surfers experienced more freedom to found a hedonistic, nonutilitarian, and autonomous sport. Champion California surfers in the 1930s and 1940s, many of whom were lifeguards, rode with superior grace and deportment.¹⁷ This style reflected the

13. Irwin, "Surfing," 144.

14. Californian and Hawaiian lifeguards demonstrated the malibu board Australia in the summer of 1956–57. Invited for a special international surf lifesaving carnival coinciding with Melbourne's Olympic Games, they enthralled crowds along the New South Wales and Victorian coasts. Greg Noll and Andrea Gabbard, *Da Bull: Life Over the Edge* (South Laguna, California: Bangtail Press, 1989): 70–4. Noll was one of the lifeguards who demonstrated the malibu in 1956–57.

15. John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts, "Subcultures, Cultures and Class," in Hall and Jefferson (eds.), *Resistance Through Rituals* (London: Hutchinson, 1976): 67.

16. Editorial, "Where do we go from here?" *Surfer* 7:1 (March 1966): 19; Editorial, "The surf tax," *Surfer* 7:4 (September 1966): 22. For an overview of Australian conditions, see Douglas Booth, "Surfing '60s: A Case Study in the History of Pleasure and Discipline," *Australian Historical Studies* 103 (October 1994): 262–279.

17. John Heath Ball, *California Surf Riders 1946* (Los Angeles: Mountain and Sea Books, 1979).

sheer difficulty of riding heavy, roughly shaped redwood planks without fins, and the Hawaiian philosophy of flowing with nature. Hence the graceful rider displayed greater mastery and flowed with, rather than harnessed or conquered, nature.

The Waikiki Surf Club organized the first international surfing championships at Makaha, Hawaii, in 1954. Judges awarded points for length of ride, number of waves caught, skill, sportsmanship, grace and deportment. The Makaha championships founded a new sport. However, like local championships in California, the Makaha event resembled a fraternal social gathering rather than intense competition. A renowned big-wave rider, Australian Bob Pike, articulated the sentiments held by many surfers:

I don't like to compete and I don't think any of the top board riders do. It takes too much of the pleasure out of the sport and creates too many jealousies. Competitions are all against the spirit of surfing which is supposed to be a communion with nature rather than a hectic chase for points.¹⁸

Ambivalence toward competition is a hallmark of surfing culture.

The social backlash against surfing provided the impetus to organize regional and national surfing associations in the early 1960s, particularly in California and New South Wales. (Representatives of national associations formed the International Surfing Federation at the first world surfing championships at Manly, Australia, in 1964.) Surfers recognized that organized competition was essential for public acceptance of their sport. "Competition," Hoppy Swarts, the inaugural president of the United States Surfing Association, noted, "helped develop a new image with the public—the public has come to respect our surfers in the same way as they respect other athletes."¹⁹ A Sydney newspaper declared that surfers had "matured" since they had formed an official body and that they now had "the right to promote their sport."²⁰

The codification and objectification of surfing rules, however, were no simple matters. In the late 1950s, styles diversified, reflecting regional variations. California and Australian surfers introduced creative maneuvers such as "cut backs" and "nose tiding" while trying to preserve poise. This "hot-dogging" style was the precursor of an aggressive, "attacking the wave" approach to riding. Hawaiian resistance to "hot-dogging" is evident in the fact that it was ten years before an "outsider"—Australian Bernard "Midget" Farrelly—won at Makaha. (Farrelly also won the inaugural world surfing championships at Manly in May 1964.) But the most intense debate over style was between Californians and Australians.

In mid-1966 the Australian magazine *Surfing World* published a conversation with local champions Bob McTavish and Nat Young in which the

18. "Australia's fifty most influential surfers," *Australia's Surfing Life* 50 (1992): 88.

19. Editorial, "The competition scene," *Surfer* 9:2 (May 1968): 27.

20. "Early problems," *Manly Daily* (May 15, 1964).

pair boldly announced a “new era.” According to Young, “we have moved into a completely new dynamic attitude towards our surfing. We throw feeling into the surfboard shaping and then it’s expressed in our surfing.” In the same edition, staff writer John Witzig described the passing of the old era. He wrote that the aesthetic grace and poise of the first period of modern surfing had been swept away by “the onslaught of impetuous youth” and replaced with aggression, power, and radical (creative) manoeuvres on short boards.²¹ Several months later, Young won the third world surfing championships at San Diego, California.

American surfers ignored Australian pronouncements. Instead they hailed the emergence of Californian “high performers.” The entire sport, Bill Cleary wrote in *Surfer* magazine, is following (Hawaii born and California resident) David Nuuhiwa’s “relaxed creativity.”²² “Rubbish,” retorted Witzig:

[O]ur Nat Young completely dominated competition at the World Surfing Championships in San Diego. Has everyone forgotten that David was beaten? Thrashed? . . . everything the pedestal of California surfing is being built upon [outdated board designs, restricted wave contests, limited manoeuvres] means—nothing! The direction . . . is towards dynamic and controlled aggression in surfing. Nat . . . is part of this “power” school of surfing; he has crushed the “pansy” surfers of California We’re on top and will continue to dominate world surfing.²³

California surfers howled derision, variously labelling Witzig “demented,” “loudmouthed,” “kook,” “baboon,” “two-bob lair,” and so forth.²⁴

Two riding styles emerged in the mid-1960s. Hawaiian surfers danced *with* waves, flowing in smooth rhythm with their natural direction; Australian surfers danced *on* waves, “conquering,” “attacking” and reducing them to stages on which to perform. Two different philosophies underpin these styles. Polynesian philosophy, in the words of Hawaii surfer Gerry Lopez, says “it’s easier to ride the horse in the direction that it’s going”; Western philosophy expresses itself through a “raw, competitive, [and] purposeful” approach to life.²⁵ Western philosophy saturates Australian beach culture including surfing style. It is the philosophy upon which the surfbathers founded the SLSAA at the turn of the twentieth century and is evident in the scores of books written about the Association which bear titles such as *Heroes of the Surf*, *Gladiators of the Surf*, and *Surf: Australians Against the Sea*.

21. “A new era! McTavish and Young discuss,” *Surfing World* 8: 1 (1966): 23; John Witzig, “An end to an era,” *ibid.*, 37–41.

22. Bill Cleary, “The high performers,” *Surfer* 8:1 (March 1967): 38–49.

23. John Witzig, “We’re tops now,” *Surfer* 8:2 (May 1967): 46–52. *Surfer* stoked the controversy: the front cover of the magazine showed a photograph of Nat Young crouching on the nose of his board. Nearly 20 years later, Witzig claimed his article was a response to Californians “kicking the Aussie can.” John Witzig, “So who’s tops now?” *Surfer* 26:11 (November 1985): 35–7.

24. American correspondents continued attacking Witzig for over twelve months. See also, “The higher performers answer Australia,” *Surfer* 8:3 (July 1967): 37–9.

25. “Attitude dancing,” *Surfer* 17:2 (June/July 1976): 101–8.

Debate over style had ramifications for surfing's development. It fuelled dissension over judging methods and scoring and led to accusations of corruption, cronyism, nepotism and bias.²⁶ Competitive surfing declined in the late 1960s under these conditions. *Surfer* magazine summed up the malaise: "More and more . . . contest results, in the eyes of most surfers, are getting further away from what surfers feel is really happening. . . . bias and ignorance must be removed from the scene before the contest system in surfing can ever hope to reach maturity."²⁷ Codification stalled as debate raged over the sport's direction.²⁸ Moreover, uncertainty discouraged potential corporate sponsors.

Soul-surfing and the Anti-competition Ethic

But style was not the sole factor contributing to the decline of competition. In the late 1960s, a set of puissant sociopolitical changes expanded the political consciousness of a new generation of Western youth. First, while an expanded, liberalized education system encouraged youth to probe, question, and challenge, "the new freedom to look around was also the freedom to be dissatisfied with what was found."²⁹ Education exposed new fears about nuclear war, ecological catastrophe, and social alienation, and led to social anxiety and pessimism.³⁰ Second, modern relations of production continued to fragment the extended family and weaken traditional moral authority. Lastly, decolonization, the Vietnam War, and civil rights protests in the United States informed the social conscience of the educated middle classes world wide. Collectively these changes spawned widespread cultural disaffiliation among educated middle class youth who resolved to "invert" bourgeois society.³¹

Disciples of this counterculture transformed the work-leisure dichotomy into a work-is-play philosophy; they rejected high consumption, materialism and competition; and they expounded a form of "fraternal" individualism which extolled creativity and self-expression within a cooperative milieu.³² Strategically, counterculture was an amalgam of alternate, typically utopian, lifestyles and political activism. Soul-surfing emerged at this juncture. On the one hand, it was a reaction against corrupt competition; on the other, it was an oppositional cultural practice symbolizing counterculture idealism. According to Young, "by simply surfing we are supporting the revolution."³³

26. Dewey Weber, "'The Makaha contest is the worst!'" *Surfer* 7:2 (May 1966): 36-9.

27. "Those who sit in judgement," *Surfer* 9:5 (November 1968): 41; see also, Drew Kampion, "The Duke," *Surfer* 11:1 (March 1970): 102-3.

28. Lester Brien, "A new era: The professional surfer," *Surfing World* 7:2 (1965): 15; "The leaders speak out: Contests and their place in surfing," *Surfabout* 5:1 (1968): 6-7; Midget Farrelly, "Now we find surfing is a poor sport," *Sun-Herald* (Sydney) (October 23, 1966).

29. John Lawton, 1963: *Five Hundred Days* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1992): 32.

30. *Ibid.*, 12.

31. Clarke *et al.*, *Resistance Through Rituals*, 62.

32. *Ibid.*, 70.

33. Nat Young, Letter, *Tracks* (October, 1970): 7.

Competitive surfing and the idealistic philosophy and anticompetition ethic of counterculture were irreconcilable. Hawaiian Kimo Hollinger expressed the animosity toward competition felt by many surfers. Hollinger was at Waimea Bay—the shrine of big wave riding—when a contest began:

The kids started paddling out with numbers on their bodies. Numbers! It was incongruous to the point of being blasphemous. I wondered about myself. I had been a contestant and a judge in a few of those contests when it all seemed innocent and fun. But it never is. The system is like an octopus with long legs and suckers that envelop you and suck you down. The free and easy surfer, with his ability to communicate so personally and intensely with his God, is conned into playing the plastic numbers game with the squares, losing his freedom, his identity, and his vitality, becoming a virtual prostitute. And what is even worse, the surfers fall for it. I felt sick.³⁴

Counterculture was short lived. Just as surfers' antisocial "pranks" in the late 1950s transgressed middle-class tolerance, so too did soul-surfing. The media labelled surfers undisciplined, indulgent and decadent; they were rotten, long-haired, unwashed drug addicts. Sydney's *Sun-Herald*, for example, called them "jobless junkies."³⁵ But the demise came from within: counterculture was unsustainable. Yippy leader Jerry Rubin's immortal words, "people should do whatever the fuck they want,"³⁶ could not reconcile alternative independence with an interdependent society. Counterculture disciples presented "philosophical" environmentalism and Eastern mysticism as panaceas: Australian surfer Robert Conneeley claimed surfing is "the ultimate liberating factor on the planet. You're working with nature in the raw in surfing"; Ted Spencer declared "when I surf, I dance for Krishna."³⁷ But neither solutions engaged the state nor addressed the problems of political economy. Drugs, a key source of enlightenment, may have given Spencer "an insight and an appreciation of the energy of . . . underlying things," but as David Caute points out, "the claimed journeys to 'inner truth' degenerate, on inspection, into puddles of vomit."³⁸ If drug taking was revolutionary praxis, it also affirmed the culture of indulgent consumption and instant gratification: drugs—"private pleasures gift wrapped in permissiveness"—were the archetypal symbols of middle-class hedonism. Lastly, the young aged and found new priorities, particularly after the resolution of major political issues (notably the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam and the end of conscription) and the onset of economic recession in the 1970s.³⁹

34. Kimo Hollinger, "An alternative viewpoint," *Surfer* 16:3 (August/September 1975): 40. See also surfers' comments in, "What is surfing," *Surfer* 11:5 (November 1970): 42-57.

35. "Jobless junkies roaming beaches," *Sun-Herald* (April 19, 1971).

36. Quoted in, Irwin Silber, *The Cultural Revolution: A Marxist Analysis* (New York: Times Change Press, 1970): 58.

37. Robert Conneeley interview, *Tracks* (April, 1978): 18; Ted Spencer interview, *Tracks* (August, 1974): 10.

38. *Ibid.*, 9; David Caute, *Sixty-Eight: The Year of Barricades* (London: Hamish and Hamilton, 1988): 40.

39. Mike Brake, *The Sociology of Youth Culture and Subcultures* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980): 96-9.

Soul-surfing never totally subsumed the sport; its disjointed and contradictory tenets made absolute subscription impossible. Ambivalence probably best summed up the attitudes of most competitors. "Surfing contests—eek," said Nat Young, explaining his decision not to compete at the 1967 Makaha event;⁴⁰ six months later he won the 1968 Australian title! "Contests are ridiculous, I am against them in principle—but the Duke is different . . . it's beautiful, just beautiful," Bob McTavish said as he entered the water for the first heat of the 1967 Duke Kahanamoku Surfing Classic!⁴¹

Competitive surfing survived and developed in Hawaii during the counter-culture. While soul-surfers flocked to Hawaii, neither *kamaaina haoles*⁴² nor indigenous Hawaiians welcomed them. Both groups viewed them as another threat to paradise.⁴³ *Kamaaina haole* Fred Hemmings, the 1968 world surfing champion, denounced soul-surfers for impairing surfing and society.⁴⁴ An indigenous Hawaiian surfer said that "long-haired, hippie-type, drug-taking surfers infest our best and most beautiful surfing spots with their repulsiveness."⁴⁵ But, the political activism of the period contributed to growing indigenous Hawaiian consciousness which would shortly have repercussions on professional surfing in the islands.

Professional Contests

Amateurism never encumbered surfing. Early surfers endorsed and advertised products, wrote newspaper and magazine columns, and made their living from associated industries. Competitions in the early 1960s offered prizes and money became widely available in the mid-1960s in the United States.⁴⁶ Two important developments in professional surfing occurred at the fourth Duke Kahanamoku contest in 1968. First, Kimo McVay, entrepreneur and business manager of the legendary Hawaiian surfer Duke Kahanamoku (see note 2), offered US\$1,000 first prize;⁴⁷ second, two of the organizers, television producer Larry Lindbergh and surfer/promoter Fred Van Dyke proposed an International Professional Surfers' Association (IPSA). The objective, Van Dyke said, was to establish a professional circuit and a surfers' association to govern the sport. Surfers at the contest elected Van Dyke president and appointed Honolulu stockbroker Ron Sorrell commissioner. Arguing in favor of the venture, Hemmings wrote that "*professionalism will make surfing legitimate*. Once the naive public, through the magic of television, sees a series of procontests, it will be easy for them to realise that surfing is a clean healthy S-P-O-R-T."⁴⁸

40. "Cabell come back," *Surfer* 9:1 (March 1968): 60.

41. "Jock Sutherland rips Sunset Beach as the 'Duke' does it again," *Surfer* 9:1 (March 1968): 30.

42. *Kamaaina haole*—white person either born or having resided for a lengthy period in Hawaii.

43. Whittaker, *Mainland Haole*, 118–9.

44. "Hemming is hot," *Surfer* 9:5 (November 1968): 68.

45. Anonymous, "Haole go home," *Surfer* 10:6 (1970): 52.

46. Patrick McNulty. "They're surfing for big contest \$\$\$," *Surfer* 6:4 (September 1965): 65–9.

47. For an overview of the history of the Duke contest, see interview, Fred Van Dyke, *Surfer* 16:4 (October/November 1975): 78.

48. Emphasis in original. Fred Hemmings, "Professionalism is white!" *Surfer* 10:5 (November 1969): 64–5.

These *kamaaina haole* advocates of professionalism also implicitly recognized the utility of what Bryan Turner calls the “ethics of managerial athleticism”—the creation and conveyance of acceptable body images.⁴⁹ While consumer capitalism propagated a new culture of pleasure, it also contained new methods of disciplining. Sophisticated advertising, for example, creates desires which it promises to satisfy, including the desire for the sporting body. Advertising manipulates people to adopt rigorous self-imposed regimens (diet and exercise) to achieve their “desires.” It also imposes a further social conformity through the public gaze of surveillance that compels individuals to seek “normality.”⁵⁰ Not surprisingly then, when Sorrell spoke about surfing’s economic potential he referred specifically to the “sex appeal” surfing could offer television.⁵¹

But not only did IPSA fail to address old concerns, it also exacerbated tensions and jealousies.⁵² Senior IPSA officials were entrepreneurs who invited participants to compete in their tournaments on the basis of “reputation”—the antithesis of sporting objectivity. “Invitational tournaments” particularly antagonised indigenous Hawaiian surfers who held different cultural beliefs about surfing and who came under the increasing influence of heightened racial and cultural pride. In the immediate postwar period relations between *haole* and Hawaiian surfers were “warm and friendly.” California surfer Rusty Miller recalls Hawaiians who would “put their arms around you and sock ya a bear hug.” This “congeniality,” he said, “lasted deep into the sixties.”⁵³ But Hawaiian activism based on “land claims, reparation for social disenfranchisement, and a wish to be free of social impositions essentially foreign to Hawaiian culture” changed these relations.⁵⁴ In 1970 IPSA organized an “expression session” (in which selected surfers were invited to “display their art”). A brawl erupted at the welcoming “good karma party” when indigenous Hawaiian surfers protested their exclusion behind “a lot of chickenshit Californian surfers.”⁵⁵ IPSA *kamaaina haoles* could not ignore indigenous surfers, but placation of “Hawaiian honor” often undermined surfing’s credibility. At the 1981 Pipeline Masters, contest judges penalized Hawaiian surfer Buttons Kaluhiokalani for interference. The penalty effectively eliminated him from the final. A crowd of jeering Hawaiians disputed the result and rushed the judging area in protest. The contest administrator, *kamaaina haole* Randy Rarick, subsequently overruled the penalty—“in the best interests of all concerned”—and added Kaluhiokalani to the final.⁵⁶

IPSA did not mature into a surfers’ association. Its leaders, notably

49. Turner, *Body and Society*, 111–2.

50. John Hargreaves, “The Body, Sport and Power Relations” in John Home, David Jary and Alan Tomlinson (eds.), *Sport, Leisure and Social Relations* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987): 151–2.

51. “There’s gold in them thar waves,” *Surfer* 10:3 (July 1969): 120–2.

52. Drew Kampion, “The Duke,” *Surfer* 11:1 (March 1970): 102–3.

53. Rusty Miller, “A personal history of surfing,” *Tracks* (April 1976): 29.

54. Whittaker, *Mainland Haole*, 44.

55. Drew Kampion, “North Shore ‘70–71,” *Surfer* 12:1 (March 1971): 40–4.

56. Paul Holmes, “Power without glory,” *Surfer* 23:4 (April 1982): 69–70.

Hemmings and Rarick, concentrated on organizing and promoting contests. They produced the first Smirnoff (Vodka) World Pro-Am Surfing Championships (considered the unofficial World Championship until 1976) and the Duke Kahanamoku and Pipeline Masters contests. While cash prizes signalled new economic possibilities for surfers, the tournaments suffered from poor administration and direction. "Reputation" continued to decide participation. Australian Mark Richards, who later became the world champion, recalls writing to Hemmings in 1974 requesting entry into the Smirnoff: "There were four alternates for the contest . . . and we were all kinda standing there waiting . . . then ten minutes before we started Fred goes: 'OK Mark Richards, pay your \$50 and you're in.'"⁵⁷ Rules varied between contests, and judging appeared inconsistent and biased.⁵⁸ Lastly, Hemmings' close relations with sponsors prompted suspicions about his motives.

Concomitantly, Australian and South African surfing interests established professional contests. In 1973 Doug Warbrick and Brian Singer, owner-managers of Rip Curl, transformed the long-running amateur contest at Bells Beach (Victoria) into a professional event. The following year, Australian surfer and journalist Graham Cassidy organized and promoted the Surfabout contest in Sydney with sponsorship from Coca-Cola and local radio station 2SM. It was a watershed event for professional surfing which required the transformation of fundamental attitudes as Cassidy explained:

There were people in both companies who were well versed in all the old myths about surfing. . . . in the early stages there were some worries about their corporate images being tainted by surfing. I had to sell them on surfing's new image. Selling the new image involved changing the attitudes of some of the would be pro surfers. The problem was getting them to think positively about the rewards of being real professionals.⁵⁹

A critical aspect of this transformation was political organization. During the Surfabout, Cassidy, Warbrick and surfers Terry Fitzgerald, Mark Warren, Ian Cairns and Peter Townend held a series of informal meetings with the aim of creating a surfers' organization to "project an image of authenticity and responsibility." In 1975 they launched the Australian Professional Surfers Association (APSA).⁶⁰

Many Australian surfers remained skeptical and apathetic, and the surfing press, which catered largely to soul-surfers, was hostile. Reflecting on *Tracks* magazine's position, former editor Phil Jarratt said that

57. Interview, Mark Richards, *Tracks* (October 1985): 48.

58. Bill Hamilton, "Smirnoff pro," *Surfer* 13:6 (February/March 1973): 64; Roy Crump, "The Duke Kahanamoku surfing classic: A blow by blow," *Surfer* 14:1 (April/May 1973): 75-8.

59. Phil Jarratt, "A profile of Graham Cassidy," *Tracks* (December 1977): 16.

60. "The Australian Professional Surfers Association," *Tracks* (May 1975): 10; Jarratt, "Graham Cassidy," 17; personal interview, Terry Fitzgerald, September 29, 1992.

recent graduates of country soul, the cool school and drug consciousness, we of the editorial team were determinedly low key about pro surfing In our corporate view pro surfing was to be encouraged because it gave us something to write about, but sucking up to sponsors didn't fit in with our image of the surfer as outlaw.⁶¹

Even Cassidy expressed doubts: "deep in my subconscious I have this reluctance to be part of competitive surfing. I'm racked with these fears . . . that what I'm doing is going to take away from surfing the virtues that first attracted me"⁶²

Australia's mainstream media by contrast embraced the new image projected by Surfabout. By its tenth year, the five national television channels were covering the contest in their evening news bulletins, current affairs programs, and sports shows. *Countdown*, the number-one pop music television show followed the contest, and the tabloid press overindulged. The Sydney *Sun* featured a page three Surfabout Girl for the duration of the contest and the *Daily Mirror* showed a three-quarter-page photograph of surfing action on the back page of a Friday edition: surfing had relegated Rugby League and racing from their traditional positions of preeminence. Articles lauding the Surfabout appeared in respected financial magazines including the *Financial Review*, *Bulletin*, *Business Weekly*, *Australian Business*, and *Trade Marketing*.⁶³

Behind these developments was a small group of perspicacious Australian surfers who reappraised competition. Ironically, the work-is-play philosophy of counterculture provided them with an awareness of the social and economic possibilities that professionalism offered: paradoxically, professional competition offered surfers an avenue to eternal hedonism. As Bill Hamilton, a Hawaiian professional surfer, laconically put it, "to live the way you want, that ol' green stuff makes the path a lot less cluttered."⁶⁴

Consolidating Professional Surfing: The Politics of a Grand Prix Circuit

After nearly two decades of intense lobbying, professional surfers finally secured an international umbrella sponsor; in 1993, Coca-Cola announced a three-year sponsorship of a grand prix surfing circuit. Surfing joined international soccer and the Olympic Games as Coca-Cola's third global sport. Surfing was truly legitimate. The politics of the intervening period is recounted in some detail here because it illuminates the complex interaction between social, cultural, and economic interests which determine sporting forms.

In the mid-1970s, Hemmings, Rarick and Jack Shipley (co-owner of Lightning Bolt Surfboards and contest judge) established International

61. Jarratt, "Pro surfing," 12.

62. Jarratt, "Profile of Cassidy," 16-7.

63. Kirk Wilcox, "Winning the media battle," *Tracks* (June 1983): 20.

64. "1971 Smirnoff pro-am," *Surfer* 13:1 (April/May 1972): 53.

Professional Surfers (IPS) as a contest promotion and marketing organization.⁶⁵ In an attempt to objectify the sport and build a grand prix type circuit, IPS introduced a uniform set of contest rules and a ranking system based on contest earnings. Ian Cairns finished on top of IPS's 1975 rankings. APSA also ranked surfers that year and Terry Fitzgerald won that race based on contest placings.

The following season Townend and Cairns agreed to work with Hemmings and Rarick under the IPS banner to organize international surfing. Townend became the 1976 world professional surfing championship based on his performance in 14 international events. Over a decade later Townend recalled that "I didn't even get a trophy for winning the title. For photographs Fred Hemmings removed a trophy from the Outrigger Canoe Club (Waikiki) trophy case and we held it together."⁶⁶

Hemmings' inability to market the Hawaiian contests to the same degree as Australian promoters caused festering dissatisfaction. But cultural conditions in Hawaii constrained Hemmings. Neither local business nor the local press showed enthusiasm. Nearly all the sponsors came from the U.S. mainland, Japan, and Australia. Mainland states remained indifferent to sporting events in Hawaii, especially those dominated by foreign competitors and sponsors. Moreover, a vigorous anticontest lobby opposed to the monopolization of beaches during contests emerged on the North Shore. Lastly, *haole* immigration from the mainland in the 1970s fueled racial tensions; the "focking *haole*" appeared very low on Hawaii's status totem.⁶⁷

With financial backing from Beachcomber Bill Sandal Company, Cairns proposed a grand prix circuit with an annual prize pool for the top-ranked surfers in 1977.⁶⁸ Thus two rankings again appeared in 1977. South African Shaun Thomson won both "titles" but only Cairns' circuit offered any financial reward (\$US5,000). Simultaneously, Cairns and Townend formed a surfers' union, the Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP). The ASP adopted a strident anti-IPS position: Cairns alleged that the IPS was disorganized, unrepresentative and more concerned with ingratiating itself in the local Hawaiian community.⁶⁹ ASP members demanded more invitations to rated events, more prize money, and representation on the IPS board. Hemmings refused. The IPS, he said, was a marketing venture not a surfers' union. He reinforced this distinction by changing the name of International Professional *Surfers* to International Professional *Surfing*.

Not satisfied with this change, the ASP attempted to form its own grand-prix circuit. It appointed Al Paterson (a close associate of Bill Marre, owner of Beachcomber Bill Sandal Company) executive director at the beginning of 1978.

65. "International Professional Surfers," *Surfer* 17:6 (February/March 1977): 92-4.

66. "Professional surfing: A brief history," *Association of Surfing Professional 1991 Media Guide/Year Book*: 42.

67. Whitaker, *Mainland Haole*, 142, 167.

68. Women surfers also formed their own professional association and circuit in 1977.

69. Interview, Ian Cairns, *Tracks* (January 1979): 22.

Paterson secured a letter of intent from a clothing company to sponsor the circuit. But Hemmings outmaneuvered Cairns and Townend. He secured sponsorship from Pan American Airline and enticed surfers to remain in the fold.⁷⁰ Two factors lost ASP critical support: arrogance and pretentiousness. Australian surfers dominated Hawaiian contests in 1975–76⁷¹ and they left no doubt about their feelings of superiority. In a particularly provocative article, reminiscent of John Witzig's "new era" challenge, professional surfer Wayne Bartholomew wrote:

nobody was keen [to put some unknown Aussie kid in the lineup] and so to gain both media and competitive recognition, we had to paddle out on the gnarliest days at Pipeline and Sunset, and literally attempt impossible maneuvers. . . . when you are a young emerging rookie from Australia . . . you not only have to come through the back door to get invitations to the pro meets, but you have to bust the door down before they hear ya knocking.⁷²

"War" erupted when Australian surfers returned to the North Shore the following season. Bartholomew was assaulted; Cairns and Bartholomew felt sufficiently intimidated to barricade themselves in their hotel; threats were made to bum Cairn's house down; and Hawaiian surfers exerted pressure on local board manufacturers not to supply Australians.⁷³ Tensions only eased after the respected Hawaiian elder surfer Eddie Aiku intervened. The situation was easily resolved, according to Aikau: "you Aussies gotta learn to be humble."⁷⁴

Australian surfers also shied away from the ASP because of Cairns' and Townend's brazen attempt to advance professional surfing through an ostentatious marketing venture known as the Bronzed Aussies.⁷⁵ Comprised of Cairns, Townend, and Warren, the Bronzed Aussies employed gross hype and glitter to sell surfing as a glamorous professional sport at a time when the surfing fraternity and emerging sorority were debating the sport's future direction.⁷⁶ Cairns' and Townend's audacity and presumptuousness isolated the pair.

IPS agreed to surfer representation on the board in 1978. But it remained financially insecure. When Pan-Am withdrew its sponsorship after one season, IPS could not find a successor. Hemmings resigned in 1979, unable to reconcile his dual positions as an IPS director and a contest promoter. Surfers restructured

70. Peter Townend, "ASP world tour, take one," *Association of Surfing Professionals 1992 Media Guide and Year Book*: 54, 184. Paterson resigned as executive director and the sponsor withdrew citing a conflict of marketing interest with IPS.

71. Mark Richards, Ian Cairns, and Wayne Bartholomew finished first, second and third respectively in the Smirnoff; Cairns won the Duke; Richards and Terry Fitzgerald finished first and second respectively in the World Cup; and Richards, Mark Warren and Wayne Lynch filled three of the first six places in the Lightning Bolt contest.

72. Wayne Bartholomew, "Bustin' down the door," *Surfer*, 17:5 (December 1976/January 1977): 74–82.

73. Phil Jarratt, "Jaw war on the North Shore," *Surfer* 17:6 (February/March 1977): 46–8.

74. *Ibid.*

75. "The Bronzed Aussies," *Tracks* (December 1976): 46; Interview, Mike Hurst, *Tracks* (April 1977): 12.

76. "Ian Cairns' new direction," *Tracks* (April 1987): 51.

the IPS which comprised a 24-member board made up of an equal number of contest directors and professional surfers.⁷⁷ Surfers finally achieved equal representation, but the IPS was too unwieldy and failed to secure an umbrella sponsor.

In December 1982, Cairns announced that OP (Ocean Pacific) would underwrite the costs of a grand prix circuit for three years under the name ASP (Association of Surfing Professionals) in return for licensing rights to the ASP logo. Cairns would become executive director. Surfers supported the arrangement, and convinced some more influential contest directors to vote in favor of the proposal.⁷⁸ The new ASP comprised a seven-member executive of three contest promoters and three surfers.⁷⁹

The ASP immediately reorganised the surfing calendar: the season shifted from June to April, beginning in South Africa and finishing in Australia. The ASP argued that Hawaii was geographically isolated and that the Hawaiians had failed to promote the sport, had not attracted sponsors from the mainland, and did not give surfers their due recognition. ASP executive member Graham Cassidy explained that "Hawaiian organizers weren't doing enough [In Australia] we give the world champion all he deserves. We've all worked very hard to give the sport credibility in Australia"⁸⁰

Hemmings immediately moved to protect his "property." He "owned" the Pipe Masters, Duke Classic, and World Cup and these contests' value depended upon selling the television rights to major U.S. broadcasters. When the ASP shifted the end of season to Australia, Hemmings' contests were no longer major sporting events; television interest plummeted and the value of the contests evaporated. When NBC offered only a delayed coverage of the World Cup, food corporation Sunkist withdrew its sponsorship.⁸¹ In mid-1983, Hemmings announced that he would not seek ASP sanction for his three Hawaiian events. Hemmings accused the ASP of "evolving in the wrong direction" and claimed that OP's involvement with the ASP was a "blatant conflict of interest."⁸² Yet, despite his objections, Hemmings nonetheless proposed a "compromise": the ASP could buy the World Cup (excluding sponsorship) and the ratings for the Masters and Duke. The ASP rejected the offer and banned members from entering Hemmings' events on threat of a two-year suspension.⁸³ The ASP's moves placed several Hawaiian surfers in no-win situations and exacerbated tensions. Michael Ho, for example, was sponsored by Off Shore which also sponsored the

77. Paul Holmes, "IPS gets a facelift," *Surfer* 21:9 (September 1980): 90.

78. "Pros force direction change," *Tracks* (February 1983): 18; "New body to take over world pro surfing," *Surfer* 24:4 (March 1983): 74; Interview, Ian Cairns, *Tracks* (April 1984): 8.

79. "Pros force direction change." *Tracks* (February 1983): 18.

80. "ASP could pop Aussie balloon," *Tracks* (February 1986): 11.

81. Paul Holmes, "Pro surfing: Breaking through or falling apart?" *Surfer* 23:12 (December 1982): 39.

82. "Hawaiian controversy goes on and on," *Tracks* (December 1983): 8; "ASP update," *Surfer* 25:1, (January 1984): 72-3.

83. This was reduced to loss of ratings and seedings, and later further reduced to a US\$1,500 fine and 10 per cent of winnings in the events.

Pipeline Masters. Ho would have breached his contract with Off Shore had he withdrawn from the event.⁸⁴ But in 1988, under pressure from competitors who wanted the season to climax in big surf, the ASP reorganized the circuit to finish in Hawaii.

OP withdrew its sponsorship at the end of 1984 after just two years and handed the licensing rights to Cairns.⁸⁵ Despite fears that he would retain total ownership and control, Cairns ceded the ASP name and assets to members and contest owners in exchange for a five-year contract as the association's executive director.⁸⁶ Again the ASP was without an umbrella sponsor. Cairns believed that the U.S. mainland would carry professional surfing into a golden era and he set up the head office in Los Angeles. But the golden era never dawned and Cairns retired in 1986.⁸⁷

Cassidy replaced Cairns and moved the ASP headquarters to Sydney. "We need to go where the real money base in pro surfing is, not the imaginary base," he said. "Let's face it, there's a thousand bloody millionaires in Huntington Beach and the door was wide open for them to come in and make surfing their little baby. But none of them did."⁸⁸

In February 1993, Coca-Cola rejected an ASP proposal to sponsor a grand prix circuit (although it sponsored the Coke Classic, the second richest event on the circuit). While the central board in Atlanta supported the idea, regional offices were divided: the South Pacific and North America voted in favour, Europe, Asia and Africa against, and South America abstained.⁸⁹ But just over six months later, Coke reversed its decision. Why did the company suddenly approve the sponsorship? In April the ASP sanctioned a "speciality" event ("Surf the Edge") sponsored by Coke's arch rival Pepsi-Cola. Pepsi invested over US\$1m in the exercise, claiming that it wanted to film an advertisement based on a surfing contest. Senior Coca Cola managers admonished the ASP, expressing surprise and disappointment that the sport had deserted it for Pepsi. One manager threatened that Coke "will have a serious rethink about how we deal with the ASP."⁹⁰ Indeed it did!

Cassidy recognized the ASP's debt, especially to regional executive Ian Rowden. As marketing manager for Coca-Cola Bottlers Sydney, Rowden vigorously supported Surfabout in the 1970s and 1980s. And his enthusiasm never waned. Rowden "proudly" launched Coke's three-year sponsorship—as marketing manager for the South Pacific region. The ASP immediately reorganized the

84. Ho competed and paid the ASP-imposed fines. Dane Kealoha and Buzzy Kerbox, however, refused and retired from the circuit.

85. "OP jumps ASP ship," *Tracks* (December 1984): 11. OP withdrew when Munsingwear clothing mounted a takeover bid.

86. "ASP meeting bear fruit, of a kind," *Tracks* (March 1985): 17.

87. Cairns cites the riot during the Ocean Pacific contest at Huntington Beach in 1986 as the catalyst for his resignation. "Ian Cairns' new direction," *Tracks* (April 1987): 51.

88. "Cassidy, the man most likely to," *Tracks* (November 1986): 20.

89. "The umbrella man," *Australia's Surfing Life* 58 (1993): 34.

90. "Cola wars," *Tracks* (June 1993): 23; "Cola surf wars," *Australia's Surfing Life* 57 (1993): 33.

1994 calendar to finish in Australia which Rowden described as the launching pad from which surfing would diffuse around the world.⁹¹ Cassidy explained that “the best possible spotlight on the year end season . . . can’t be achieved in Hawaii” where “they tend to treat [surfing] as a lifestyle thing rather than a serious sport.”⁹² Increasingly more surfers concur with Cassidy, despite their earlier insistence that the circuit conclude in Hawaii. Gary Elkerton admitted that “the ultimate is to have three events that finish off the tour in big surf in Hawaii,” but “because of the locals and the politics you can’t do that.”⁹³

Conclusion

As Chris Rojek reminds us “leisure shapes, and is shaped by . . . the interplay of social interests.”⁹⁴ Rojek, however, tends to reduce social interests to “the general power structure of capitalist society.” But, as the history of surfing proves, the social relations of leisure must also be examined within their specific cultural contexts. While consumer capitalism precipitated a reappraisal of leisure as an adjunct of work, local cultural conditions played a critical mediating role. In the interwar period, for example, the lifesaving movement defined the rules of pleasure and discipline which constrained the unbounded hedonism promoted by consumer capitalism in Australia. By contrast, indigenous culture set no constraints in Hawaii.

It is no coincidence that criticisms of surfers finally evaporated after the creation of institutional structures with an explicit disciplinary content. The constitutions of both the APSA and IPSA, for example, included a “code of conduct” which compelled members to “forward a good image” to sponsors and public.⁹⁵ But why did surfers reorganise the very institutions that they had renounced a decade earlier? As the disciples of counterculture discovered in the early 1970s, under capitalism people are not free not to work. Surfers’ dreams of eternal hedonism vanished when the surplus available for alternative lifestyles dried up with the economic recession in the early 1970s. An institutional structure within the framework of consumer capitalism was the only option at that juncture that could offer economic livelihoods and hedonistic lifestyles—at least to the gifted few. But again, we should not glibly reduce professional sport to the capitalist mode of production, as the following comment by professional American surfer Jamie Brisick implies: “I surf for the same reason I perpetually flog myself to the heights of orgasmic pleasure—because it feels good.”⁹⁶

91. “Coke pours millions into the surf,” *Sydney Morning Herald* (October 14, 1993); Jarratt, “Profile of Cassidy;” Wilcox, “Media battle.”

92. “Oh good, an umbrella sponsor,” *Australia’s Surfing Life* 63 (1993): 36; “Finale of world tour is back at home,” *Sydney Morning Herald* (January 3, 1994).

93. “Umbrella sponsor.”

94. Rojek, *Leisure Theory*, 18–9.

95. “The Australian Professional Surfers Association,” *Tracks* (May 1975): 10.

96. “Surfers on why they surf,” *Tracks* (October 1991): 81.

Professionalism ensured surfing's respectability. But, professional surfers remain the principal source of tension within the movement. Many devotees consider the strict codes of conduct, manufactured hype and gloss, and bureaucracy of professionalism the antithesis of surfing's hedonistic ideals.

History cannot, of course, predict the outcome of leisure relations. Nonetheless, it does inform us that resolution in one area invariably produces new tensions elsewhere. In a sense, tension between pleasure and discipline is an intrinsic property of leisure which stems from the Latin term *licere*—be allowed. Surfing offers a concrete example of the economic and cultural constraints and ambiguities which define freedom in leisure and sport.